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ABSTRACT

This paper examines how teachers, teachers' assistants, and principals in two schools define multicultural education and how their ideas are translated into practice. The study identifies the problems associated with a definition of the term "multicultural education." Possible barriers to implementing multicultural education and educators' attitudes about the relative importance of multicultural education in the curriculum were also investigated. Surveys were distributed to principals, teachers, and teachers' assistants in two public elementary schools in central Virginia. It was concluded that staff members are generally willing to incorporate multicultural education into their curriculum. However, educators' ideologies and implementation of multicultural education vary greatly from school to school and from classroom to classroom. If study participants are to progress, it is suggested they must begin to communicate with each other about the concepts of multicultural education using a common language. Appended are: the survey questions used in this study; data from the survey; and a selection of culturally diverse children's literature. Contains 22 references. (EH)

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How Two School Faculties Look at "Multicultural Education"

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I. Abstract: Multicultural education is an educational concept which is continually evolving; the vagueness of the term has helped create an increasing gap between theory and practice. This paper examines how teachers, teachers' assistants, and principals define multicultural education and how their ideas are translated into practice in schools. It also investigates possible barriers to implementing multicultural education and educators' attitudes about the relative importance of multicultural education in the curriculum.

II. Rationale:

Surprisingly little research closely examines what staff members' (teachers and teachers' assistants) and principals' think about multicultural education. Multicultural education has become a buzz word, or a catch-phrase, for efforts to address cultural diversity in today's schools. Is multicultural education a system for teaching social studies? Is it intended only for minority populations? Does it consist of units of study on single groups, such as Mexican-Americans? As the following literature review suggests, there seems to be no universal definition for multicultural education.

Because teachers are ultimately responsible for implementing curriculum, I wanted to explore educators' thinking about multicultural education. That is, I wanted to examine how they define the concept and how they attempt to implement multicultural education in their classrooms. The way in which educators think about multicultural education undoubtedly shapes life in classrooms.

Experts have created definitions of multicultural education, but few researchers have asked those closest to the children how they view multicultural education. The process of surveying school personnel and sharing the results with them will hopefully encourage a dialogue. This dialogue might stimulate educators to examine their concepts of multicultural education and their methods for implementing multicultural education programs in their classrooms and schools.

III. Purpose:

Specifically, this study addresses four research questions:

Q1 How do staff members think about multicultural education?

Q2 How do principals think about multicultural education?

Q3 What is the match between staff members' and principals' thoughts about multicultural education?

Q4 How do the thoughts of staff members at different schools compare?

IV. Literature Review

Multicultural education has been defined in a multitude of ways. Due to the variety of meanings, there is a great deal of uncertainty about how multicultural education should be incorporated in the school curriculum. These multicultural educational concerns are not unique to the United States. Due to the recent influx of immigrants into countries such as Australia and Denmark, for example, other countries are also wrestling with this dilemma.

Literature on the history of the term "multicultural education" varies in its unraveling, depending on the scholar describing its evolution. Gollnick and Chinn (1986) look at multicultural education as something that began as early as the 1920s. "Multicultural education is not a new concept; it is a relatively new name for concepts which have existed since the 1920s when the writing and training in intercultural education and ethnic studies began" (Chinn

& Plata, 1987, p. 8). However, most individuals contend that multicultural education began in the 1960s.

According to Banks (1994), such happenings as the large influx of immigrants (due to the Immigrant Reform Act of 1965) and the Civil Rights Movement served as the impetus for multicultural education. Banks also contends that the increasing cultural diversity of America and the racial tension prompted the critical analyses of school textbooks and the reassessment of the assumptions underlying the deficiency orientation. That is, some educators believed that children were culturally deficient because of their environment and inferior genetic make-up, and needed remediation to successfully function in the classroom. Sleeter and Grant state: "[t]he notion of cultural deficiency was promoted by educators and social scientists who lacked an anthropological background and who took the middle-class Anglo culture as their reference point for judging others" (1988, p. 60). School reforms, desegregation efforts, and actions of student activists speaking out against inequality are also cited as catalysts for the energetic growth of the multicultural education approach in the 1970s (Gay, 1983; Sleeter & Grant, 1988). In addition, Sleeter and Grant note that court cases such as *Lau versus Nichols* (1974), the women's movement, and the Ethnic Heritage Act increased expression of heritage and identity by ethnic groups. New support for teaching cultural pluralism further encouraged the evolution of the multicultural education movement.

Schools and educators responded to ethnic groups (in particular Latinos, African-Americans and Native Americans) in the 1960s in part by hiring more minority teachers, and by observing holidays and ethnic celebrations that were emphasized by ethnic groups (Banks, 1994). Banks also notes that feminists, senior citizens, disabled persons, and gay advocates stimulated the historical development of multicultural education in the United States. According to Banks (1994), the history of multicultural education can be divided into five phases:

Phase I: Monoethnic Courses: During the 1960s and 1970s, monoethnic studies emerged when African-Americans and other ethnic minorities demanded that institutions and schools better meet the needs of their children and youth. Schools and institutions responded to these demands by creating courses on individual ethnic groups.

Phase II: Multiethnic Studies Courses: Phase II came about when increasing numbers of ethnic minorities began to ask for courses on their specific ethnic cultures. During Phase II, comparative ethnic studies flourished, and differing points of view of history were explored in schools and institutions.

Phase III: Multiethnic Education: Educators realized that ethnic studies alone would not bring about educational equality, and that a total educational reform of the school environment was needed, as ethnic studies became more prevalent. During the mid 1970s to the mid 1980s some contended ethnic groups were treated unfairly in schools (e.g. students of color were often placed in low academic tracts based on what were considered to be biased Anglo, middle

class IQ tests). Research on such issues stimulated some people to press for educational reform.

Phase IV: Multicultural Education: In phase IV, the educational reform movement was expanded to include individuals with disabilities, women, religious groups, and poor white groups such as the Appalachian people. During this phase, multicultural education became the preferred terminology in many educational institutions, in part because the concept enabled schools and universities to combine limited resources; this further allowed them to focus on a wide range of groups, as opposed to limiting their focus to ethnic and racial groups (Banks & Banks 1993; Sleeter & Grant, 1988).

Phase V: Institutionalization of the Key Components of Phases I through Phases IV: Phase V is a combination of previous phases in which several components of multicultural education are infused into the school curriculum. In describing this gradual and evolutionary process, Banks notes that the phases of multicultural education have overlapped with one another. Phase V requires a real commitment of time and effort from all people involved in the process of education.

National teacher organizations are among those who have dealt with issues related to multicultural education. Like others, they define and analyze multicultural education in different ways. In 1979, the National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) defined multicultural education as "preparation for the social, political, and economic realities that individuals experience in culturally diverse and complex human encounters" (Rodriguez, 1983,

p. 5). NCATE reexamined their stance on multicultural education in 1992. In Standards, Procedures, And Policies For The Accreditation Of Professional Education Units, they defined a multicultural perspective as "recognition of (1) the social, political, and economic realities that individuals experience in culturally diverse and complex human encounters and (2) the importance of culture, race, sex and gender, ethnicity, religion, socioeconomic status and exceptionalities in the education process" (NCATE, 1992, p. 65). Because their explanation of a "multicultural perspective" is general, the reader has little idea about how a 'multicultural perspective' might be attained. Consequently, educators must look to other sources for concrete ideas for implementing multicultural education.

The National Education Association (NEA) has defined multicultural education as "a way of helping students perceive the cultural diversity of the U. S. citizenry so that they may develop pride in their own cultural legacy, awaken to the ideals embodied in the cultures of their neighbors, and develop an appreciation of the common humanity shared by all the peoples of the earth" (NEA, 1991, p. 233). According to the National Education Association, multicultural education should help individuals appreciate and become aware of diverse cultures, share the world's limited resources, encourage international cooperation, as well as the mastery of foreign languages (NEA, 1991, p. 233). The NEA also states in its handbook that respect, self-esteem, extensive multicultural education teacher training programs and sufficient

funding for implementation play important roles in multicultural/global education (NEA, 1991, p. 23).

The National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) looks at multicultural education in terms of content and curriculum implementation, stating: "multicultural curriculum content must be adapted to the cultural and individual variations of each new group of children if it is to be developmentally and contextually appropriate" (Bredekamp & Rosegrant, 1992, p. 124). NAEYC further comments that non-stereotypical, multicultural activities and materials help assure individual appropriateness of the curriculum, thereby improving self-esteem and encouraging appreciation and acceptance of the students' similarities and differences (Bredekamp, 1987, pp. 7-8). Notably, the NAEYC feels that educators should go beyond the "tourist approach" to multicultural education. In Developmentally Appropriate Practice In Early Childhood Programs Serving Children Birth Through Eight, the NAEYC affirms: "Multicultural experiences should not be limited to a celebration of holidays and should include foods, music, families, shelter, and other aspects common to all cultures" (Bredekamp, 1987, p. 8).

Thus, multicultural education specialists look at multicultural education as anything from "an interrelationship between content and process" (Hernandez, 1989) to "an idea or concept, educational reform movement, and a process" (Banks, 1989).

Several individuals (e. g. Gollnick and Chinn, 1986; Sleeter and Grant, 1988) have written extensively about multicultural education and its role in today's world. Gollnick and Chinn contend that educators might begin to think about multicultural education by thinking about the complex nature of pluralism in this country. That is, an individual's identity is based not only on ethnicity, but also on such factors as socio-economic level, religion and gender (p. viii).

Similarly, Sleeter and Grant (1988) and Banks & Banks (1989) view multicultural education rather broadly. In their book entitled Multicultural Education: Issues And Perspectives, they explain how multicultural education is at least three things: an idea or concept, an educational reform movement, and a process. "Multicultural education incorporates the idea that all students--regardless of their gender and social class and their ethnic, racial, or cultural characteristics--should have an equal opportunity to learn in school" (Banks & Banks, 1989, p. 2). Sleeter and Grant contend that the term "multicultural education" is confining; the term they substitute is "education that is multicultural." "[T]he expression 'education that is multicultural' means that the entire education program is redesigned to reflect the concerns of diverse cultural groups. Rather than being one of several kinds of education, it is a different orientation toward the whole educational process" (Sleeter & Grant, 1988, p. 175). "Educational that is multicultural," demonstrates respect for diversity and individual differences (Sleeter & Grant, 1988). "Multicultural education has emerged as an umbrella concept that deals with race, culture, language, social class, gender and

handicap" (Sleeter & Grant, 1988, p. 26). As the term has broadened in meaning, some scholars have expressed great concern that multicultural education is becoming so diffuse that it is not addressing racism.

How is multicultural education typically implemented in schools? Sleeter and Grant (1987; 1988) reviewed 38 books and 89 articles and identified five different approaches:

1. **Teaching the culturally different.** Teachers who adopt this approach contend that "culturally deficient" students need special teaching strategies that remediate their "deficiencies" and reconnection them the regular school program. Some advocates of this approach hold that there are values and skills as well as a certain core of knowledge that all Americans should acquire.

2. **Human relations approach.** This approach aims at helping individuals and groups work together to develop a positive sense of self-esteem. In other words, those who adopt this approach try to encourage all students to resolve conflicts, and accept and understand one another.

3. **Single-group studies approach.** This method addresses the history of oppression of particular groups and promotes cultural pluralism. Encouraging pride in individual heritage, as well as examining and studying single-group contributions are important aspects of this approach.

4. **Multicultural education.** This approach evolved as some educators became disenchanted with previous approaches. It

promotes pluralism and equal opportunity. Many advocates of this approach see the nation as a "tossed salad." They feel that schools should reflect diversity and respect individual differences, without having students relinquish their unique identity. Although this approach often encompasses language, race, gender, culture and handicap, it generally overlooks social economic status.

5. Education that is multicultural and social reconstructivist. Those who adopt this approach address educational and social equity. They do so by analyzing and attempting to solve social problems, challenging social stratification, empowering young people to recognize oppressive forces and develop visions, and promoting busing to end racial segregation (Fry, 1992; Sleeter & Grant, 1987, 1988; Herbert & McNergney; in press).

Bob Suzuki (1984) views multicultural education in the form of goals. Suzuki's working definition of multicultural education "is a multidisciplinary educational program that provides multiple learning environments matching academic, social and linguistic needs of students. These needs may vary widely due to differences in race, sex, ethnicity, or sociolinguistic backgrounds of students" (Suzuki, 1984, p. 305). Among some of the guidelines Suzuki recommends for translating multicultural educational theory into practice are listed below. He contends that multicultural education should:

- start "where people are at" (That is, based on John Dewey's research in 1963, education should take into account children's prior knowledge and sociocultural backgrounds.);
- help depolarize inter-ethnic hostility and conflict, by looking for cross-cultural bridges;
- increase parental involvement in children's education and tap multicultural educational resources in the community;
- produce changes in teaching practices, curriculum and social structure;
- aid students' understanding of the causalities of injustice and oppression; and
- address the elimination of oppression and social problems.

He adds that multicultural education should be approached as a long process, not an overnight fix (Suzuki, 1984, pp. 307-309).

Like Suzuki, Pamela Fry(1992) believes that multicultural education needs to be viewed in terms of goals. Fry views the absolute goal of multicultural education as "equity among all individuals, regardless of race, gender, physical limitations, or economic status" (1992, p. 139). She distinguishes equity from equality in her research. Equity is defined as fairness and justice; where as equality demands sameness, uniformity, and balance. Like Sleeter and Grant, she also remarks that the word "multicultural" has been applied to an assortment of educational approaches. That is, there are false pretenses for multicultural education.

Both teachers and children bring their biases and prejudices into the classroom each day. For teachers to confront the prejudices and biases that their students bring to school, they should first examine their own. "Anthropologists George and Louise Spindler (1993) who have spent years documenting life in cultures around the world argue that much is to be learned. They believe, for example, that when teachers examine different cultures their powers of reflectivity in their own culture are enhanced" (Herbert & McNergney, in press, p. 36). As Carolyn Domai, an insightful science and algebra teacher from Brighton High School in Boston, Massachusetts stated: "[m]ulticulturalism is not carried in the subject area, but is carried in the relationships between the students and between the teachers" (Equity and Choice, 1988, p. 19).

Multicultural education is a label that meets much resistance, in part because it is overused and ill-defined. Educators in particular may be resistant to efforts to infuse multicultural education into their programs, because they are unsure of what to do and how to do it. Educators need guidance, funding, unbiased materials, multicultural literature, and an administration and atmosphere that will support their efforts. Valora Washington's study on teachers' attitudes on implementing multicultural education suggests "[t]eachers indicated repeatedly that multicultural curricula methods were inaccessible to them" (1982, p. 192).

Some organizations have tried to offer educators ideas that might stimulate "multicultural education" programs and help

teachers ensure a respectful and appropriate educational environment for culturally diverse individuals. In 1991 the Southern Poverty Law Center created Teaching Tolerance, a bi-annual publication, to provide educators with resources to promote harmony in the classroom. The editor, Sara Bullard, notes that to be tolerant is to welcome individual differences and delight in the sharing our differences of politics, race, economics, abilities, culture, and language. This publication is available to educators at no charge and has a creative collection of ready-to-use ideas, student activities, book reviews, and articles on anything from the Civil Rights Movement to examples of ways have students examined sensitive issues.

Louise Derman-Sparks and the A. B. C. Task Force of the National Association For The Education Of Young Children have created an excellent resource book for teachers. It is entitled Anti-Bias Curriculum: Tools For Empowering Young Children. The book suggests ways that educators can create an anti-bias environment, guide interactions, make adaptations, and get their hands on anti-bias materials. For example, included in the text is a section that examines children's books specific to disabilities, people of color, family structures, gender roles, work, prejudice and activism.¹

¹ As part of my project, I prepared an annotated bibliography of sixty-three children's books for the schools that participated in my study (See Appendix C).

Materials are available that can help educators begin to close the gap between theory and practice addressing multicultural education. However, "[e]ducators have not advocated a single, unified plan for approaching multicultural education" (Sleeter & Grant, 1988, p. 26). It must also be stated that some teachers feel that multicultural education primarily benefits Anglo-European students, and that some teachers also think that the curriculum demands are so great the addition of another concept, like multicultural education, is problematic. Although there is much confusion as to what multicultural education is, educators seem to agree that there is a need to provide educational equality for all students.

V. Design Of Study: To answer my research questions on multicultural education, I distributed surveys to principals, teachers, and teachers' assistants of two elementary schools. The two public schools in which these surveys were administered are located in central Virginia.

School #1, Woods Elementary, which was founded in 1930, is located in one of the oldest residential areas in the city. Of the approximately 395 students that attend Woods Elementary, 179 are white, 214 are African-American, and 2 are categorized as other. Of the 395 students, approximately 74% are on free or reduced lunch programs. This school (K-4) is headed by an African-American, female principal.

School #2, Jones Elementary, which was founded in 1930, is located near a large university in a more affluent area of town. Of the approximately 299 students that attend Jones Elementary, 169 are white, 111 are African-American and 19 are categorized as other. Approximately 38% of the 299 students at Jones Elementary are on free or reduced lunch programs. Jones Elementary (K-4) is headed by a white, male principal.

A. Subjects: The subjects of this study at school #1 (Woods) were 39 teachers and teachers' assistants, and their principal. At Jones Elementary (School #2), participants included 12 teachers and teacher assistants' and their principal. The Woods Elementary faculty had just participated in "multicultural education" in-service workshops.

B. Procedure: At both schools, a multicultural education survey was distributed to the teachers, teacher assistants, and principals at a faculty meeting on a Wednesday afternoon. Respondents at Woods Elementary filled out the surveys and returned them immediately following the faculty meeting. The educators at the second school were allowed to complete the surveys at home. Those who completed their survey either returned them that day, or the following day.

C. Instrumentation: The survey questions were devised by a multicultural education professor at The University of Virginia; the researcher and her academic advisor revised the questions for the

purpose of this study. The classroom approach question (question #4) was based on James A. Banks' (1989) levels of integration of ethnic content. A sample of the multicultural education survey that was administered can be found in Appendix A.

VI. Analysis of Results: Of the ten questions addressed in this study, nine were yes/no questions and one was open-ended. Two of the yes/no questions asked respondents to explain their responses. For the purposes of this study, I analyzed responses to three survey questions specific to how individuals define and implement multicultural education and their perceptions about the relative importance of multicultural education in the school curriculum.

Q1 How do teachers think about multicultural education?

To answer Q1, I looked at the responses to survey questions 1, 2, and 4. • Survey question 1 asked individuals to define multicultural education.

- Survey question 2 asked individuals if they thought multicultural education was important and to explain why or why not.
- Survey question 4 asked individuals how they implemented multicultural education.

I looked for like responses and patterns of thinking within survey questions 1 and 2. In each case, commonalties were evident and verified by an independent observer (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). As evident from the discussion that follows, faculty's perceptions were somewhat varied. (For a complete listing of responses, see

Appendix B.)

Woods Elementary

The patterns of thinking that emerged from survey question on the Woods Elementary surveys were grouped into four categories:

- 1) Teaching about, learning about, and becoming aware of differences;
- 2) Valuing and respecting others;
- 3) Educating people from different backgrounds; and
- 4) Miscellaneous.

Excluding the principal's definition of multicultural education, (17/44%) responses to the survey question 1 were categorized under "valuing and respecting others." Some of the responses that were grouped into this category were:

- "Teaching students to respect and appreciate all people no matter what cultural/ethnic backgrounds they come from."
- "To educate children to acknowledge and respect the many different cultures that make up our country as well as other countries."
- "Education that takes into consideration the diverse nature of students and capitalizes on the differences, teaching appreciation for others."

Thirteen staff members (33%) responded that multicultural education is "teaching about, learning about, and becoming aware of differences." Examples of thoughts that fit this category are:

- "Education that explores/discusses/recognizes the differences of the people of the world."

- "To educate students of cultural differences and to make one's awareness of similarities between cultures increase."
- "Involving many beliefs and customs, not only in involving but including these beliefs and customs into our daily curriculum."

Four definitions (10%) fit into the "educating people from different backgrounds" category (e.g. "Teaching a diverse group of children with different ethnic backgrounds"). Three definitions (7%) were classified as "miscellaneous" (e.g. "Education that is sensitive to the contributions, beliefs, customs, etc. of all groups of people."). Two people (5%) did not provide a definition for multicultural education.

At Woods Elementary, 38 staff members (97%) responded affirmatively to survey question 2, regarding whether multicultural education is important. Only one individual did not think multicultural education was important. This particular individual stated: "I believe all young children should accept each other regardless of cultural differences. We are a family in the classroom and each child is treated like a member of our family. That might be called multicultural- -it's not the name I give to it."

The 38 responses from Woods Elementary as to why multicultural education is important were divided into seven categories. Five individuals (13%) did not give a reason as to why they thought multicultural education was important.

- 1) Building awareness and understanding; (16%)
- 2) Teaching respect for all; (13%)
- 3) Building understanding to achieve particular goals; (21%)

- 4) Teachers building their own awareness; (8%)
- 5) Concern relating to the "American Culture"; (5%)
- 6) Pride, and (5%)
- 7) General comments. (18%)

Six out of 38 (16%) of the thoughts fit into the "building awareness and understanding" category. They included:

- "I think it is important to understand each other...and know more about all cultures."
- "It brings together all and helps each understand other ways of living."

Five out of 38 (13%) responses fit the category "teaching respect for all." They included:

- "Our children need to grow up with positive attitudes and respect for each other."
- "All people value their heritage and can gain more understanding about their neighbors (classmates) with instruction. Childhood is the time to build bridges of respect for diversity."
- "We have tried to think that everyone is the same but we need to recognize and respect the differences."

Eight out of the 38 (21%) comments fit into the "building understanding to achieve particular goals" category. Some examples were:

- "Yes, because we can learn more about each group and how to get together on issues."
- "To enhance/improve ones awareness of cultural diversities. To help make the world a better place."

- "To reduce prejudice and make children aware at an early age of different cultures and to help them develop an appreciation for these differences."

Three out of 38 (8%) responses fit into the "teachers building their own awareness" category were:

- "All students need to become aware of their own personal cultural heritage. Teachers/educators need to be aware of their own culture before they can become skilled in multicultural education."
- "The "salad" rather than the "melting pot" way of thinking is fairly new to me. I am always trying to increase my awareness."
- "Because we all have biases we need to be aware of since we as teachers play such an important role in influencing young people."

Two of the 38 (5%) staff members' thoughts that fit into the concern about retaining "American Culture" category:

- "But, we must also remember our country was formed on some basic principles. We don't want to lose "The American Culture." I think we can do both."
- "All people should learn of their backgrounds and the legacy that was left to them by their forefathers. However, we should not neglect the American Culture. Being more loyal to another country than to America is a destructive thing."

Two of the 38 (5%) comments that fit into the "pride" category:

- "All children have a right to feel proud of their identify/heritage."

- "Because every child needs to feel a sense of pride and respect in themselves whether they are black, white, Chinese or whatever nationality they may be."

Seven of the 38 responses (18%) were placed into the "general comments" category in response to the importance of multicultural education. (e.g. "Most of our children come from backgrounds with very limited resources, multicultural education gives them more of a sense of themselves, and a broader perspective of the world.")

Survey question 4, which dealt with the implementation of multicultural education in the classroom yielded a variety of responses. At Woods Elementary, (17/44%) of the teachers felt that they used the "Additive Approach" to multicultural education in their classroom. Nine staff members (23%) indicated that they implemented the "Contributions Approach" in their classrooms. Six staff members (15%) identified with the "Transformation Approach" and 3 individuals (8%) identified their classroom implementation as being similar to the "Social Action Approach." Two people (5%) did not respond to the question, and 2 people (5%) indicated that they used multicultural literature and stories to implement multicultural education in their classroom.

Jones Elementary

The patterns of thinking that were elicited from survey question 1 on the Jones Elementary surveys fit the three categories used to classify responses from staff members at Woods Elementary School:

- 1) Teaching about, learning about, and becoming aware of differences;
- 2) Valuing and respecting others; and
- 3) Miscellaneous.

Excluding the principal's response, the majority (8/67%) of the responses fit into the "teaching about, learning about, and becoming aware of differences" category. Some of the definitions that fit into that category were: *

- "Multicultural education is the integration of different cultures and events into your curriculum."
- "Education provided for all students about the different cultures of all people, their native lands, both past and present, and their contributions to society."
- "Multicultural education is making students aware of other cultures by exposing them to models (pictures, actual people) from different cultures. Models should be non-stereotypical! Children need to see more than just ceremonial dress and behavior."

Three responses (25%) fit into the "valuing and respecting others" grouping. Below are comments that fit this category:

- "Multicultural education is recognizing, valuing, celebrating, and teaching about the array of values, customs and lifestyles of the varied cultures that make up our everyday world."
- "Multicultural education is helping everyone respect each other personally and the cultures of widely diverse backgrounds."
- "Multicultural education is providing a program which is genuinely committed to a diverse mind set, which teaches all to be

sensitive, responsive, and supportive to all persons and is authentic in its response to issues and confronting them."

One definition (8%) was dubbed as "miscellaneous;" it stated "[m]ulticultural education is appreciating the diversity of different cultural backgrounds. It is a very vague term."

At Jones Elementary School, all 12 staff members (100%) who responded to the survey thought multicultural education was important. However, a large portion of the staff did not take time to fill out the ten question survey, so I am unsure how representative expressed opinions are. As noted earlier, four staff members (33%) did not give a reason as to why they thought multicultural education was important. The thoughts of those at Jones Elementary School who did provide reasons for their responses about the importance of multicultural education were divided into four categories:

- 1) learning about and appreciating specific cultures...directed against the Euro-centric approach; (17%)
- 2) teachers building their own awareness; (17%)
- 3) building understanding for specific outcomes, and (25%)
- 4) general comments (8%).

The thoughts that fit into the "learning about and appreciating specific cultures...directed against the Euro-centric approach" were:

- "It is extremely important for everyone to learn and appreciate the culture of blacks, whites, Mexicans, the Chinese and other nationalities."
- "We should know about all cultures. Blacks learn about all white cultures, but whites are not taught about all cultures."

The ideas that fit into the "teachers building their own awareness" category were:

- "Because most good educators realize that a teacher who has demonstrated cultural biases toward a child can have detrimental effects on the child's and the classmate's development."
- "I think that ignorance of this issue especially in a school setting causes us not to deal with reality and also can cause feelings of exclusion, anger and alienation."

Some of the responses that fit under the "building understanding for specific outcomes" were:

- "To rid prejudice of other cultures. To teach children to be open minded to others' ideas and beliefs."
- "Education will hopefully alleviate prejudice by promoting understanding."

The responses to survey question 4 (how multicultural education is implemented) at Jones Elementary indicated that (7/58%) of the staff members implemented the "Contributions Approach" to multicultural education. Two individuals (17%) associated their implementation of multicultural education with the "Additive Approach." One individual (8%) identified with the "Transformation Approach." None of the staff members at Jones Elementary identified with the "Social Action Approach." Two individuals (17%) did not respond to the question.

Q2 How do principals think about multicultural education?

To examine Q2, I looked at the principals' responses to survey questions 1, 2, and 4.

Woods Elementary:

The Woods Elementary principal stated that "multicultural education is the integration and appreciation of other cultures into the regular curriculum: offering a better understanding of the diversity within our society and helping reduce prejudice among us because of those differences." Her definition includes four of the words frequently mentioned in her staff's definitions: cultures, appreciation, respect and differences. She thought that multicultural education was important.... "With our society becoming a diverse one, it is important for us so that we can appreciate each other. With this appreciation comes a better understanding, which could lead to a more peaceful society." She also felt that most of her teachers implemented the "Contributions Approach" to multicultural education.

Jones Elementary

According to the Jones Elementary school principal, multicultural education is "[a] program that clearly represents the diversity of its people. (It) is open, supportive, and responsive." He commented... "Far too long, educational institutions of all levels have presented their curriculum in a "Euro-centric" style, ignoring peoples of other lands and places." The Jones School principal felt that the

majority of his staff members implemented the "Transformation Approach" to multicultural education in his school.

Q3 What is the match between teachers' and principals' thoughts about multicultural education?

The principal at Woods Elementary defined multicultural education in a broad sense. Her definition most closely fit with the "teaching about, learning about, and becoming aware of differences" category. Like her staff members, she felt that multicultural education was an important issue. Her reply regarding the importance of multicultural education fit into the building understanding to achieve particular goals category. The Woods Elementary principal's response to survey question 4, did not coincide with the opinion of her staff, however. She commented that from her observation most of her staff members used the "Contributions Approach." The majority of her staff members (44%) described their implementation as the "Additive Approach."

The Jones Elementary principal also felt multicultural education was important, but his definition of multicultural education was less specific than those of his teachers. His reasoning for thinking multicultural education was important fit in the "learning about and appreciating specific cultures" espoused by 25% of his staff. The majority (58%) of the Jones Elementary staff and faculty indicated that they used the "Contributions Approach" to implement multicultural education in their classrooms. The principal felt that

most of his staff used the "Transformation Approach." This could actually be possible, due to the small number of surveys handed in.

Q4 How do the thoughts of staff members at different schools compare?

To answer Q4, I looked for similarities and differences between responses of staff members at each school to survey questions 1, 2, and 4. As illustrated in Charts 1, and 2, about 8% of the staff members at each school offered somewhat vague (categorized as miscellaneous) responses to question 1 (What is your definition of multicultural education?). Other teachers at Woods Elementary (See Chart 1 defined multicultural education in terms of efforts to encourage valuing and respecting others (44%), to teach about, learn about, and become aware of differences (33%), and to educate people from different backgrounds (10%). Staff at Jones Elementary (See Chart 2) talked about multicultural education in one of two ways. The majority (67%) viewed multicultural education in terms of teaching about, learning about, and becoming aware of differences, while 25% of the staff viewed it more as efforts to encourage valuing and respecting others.

With regard to question 2 (Do you think multicultural education is important? Why/Why not?), the majority of staff members at both schools responded affirmatively. As illustrated in Charts 3 and 4, 331.6 % of Woods staff and 41.6% of Jones staff either did not give reasons for their response, or if they did so, made only

general comments that could not be classified. Other faculty, however, offered specific reasons that varied slightly from school to school. To Woods staff (Chart 3), the three main reasons for valuing multicultural education were to build awareness and understanding of others, to teach respect for all, and to build understanding in order to achieve particular goals. Of lesser importance were building teachers' awareness, preserving the "American" culture, and instilling pride. Primary reasons offered by Jones staff (Chart 4) were the importance of learning about/appreciating other cultures, building understanding to achieve particular goals, and increasing teachers' awareness. The emphasis on teacher awareness at Woods elementary may have been stimulated by the recent in-service session on multicultural education at their school.

In looking at how staff members responded to survey question 4 (How would you describe the extent to which multicultural education is implemented in your classroom?), I noticed other differences between the two schools. As seen in Chart 5, the primary approach of Woods staff was the "Additive Approach" (44%), followed by the "Contributions Approach" (23%) and the "Transformation Approach" (15%). Fewer than 10 % talked about the "Social Action Approach" or a literature-based approach. In contrast, most staff members (58%) at Jones talked about the "Contributions Approach." About 17% indicated they used the "Additive Approach," and like Woods staff, fewer than 10% indicated they used the "Social Action Approach"

How Staff Members Define Multicultural Education at Woods Elementary

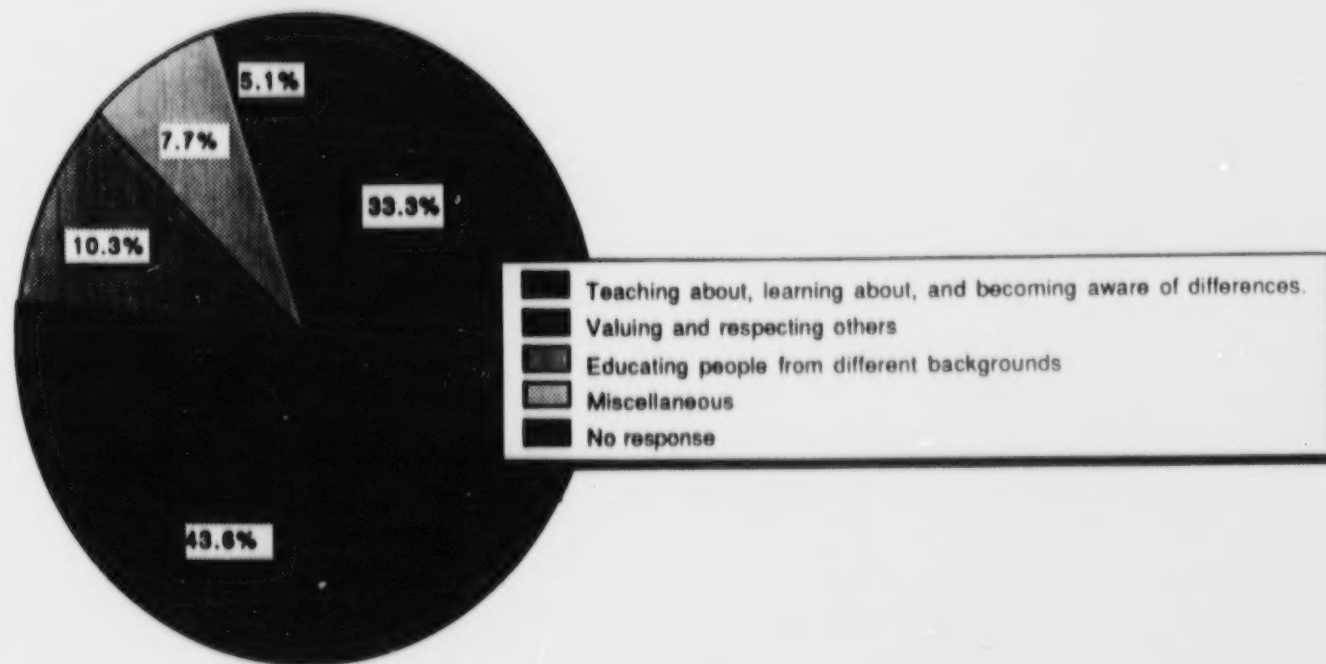


Chart 1

How Staff Members Define Multicultural Education at Jones Elementary

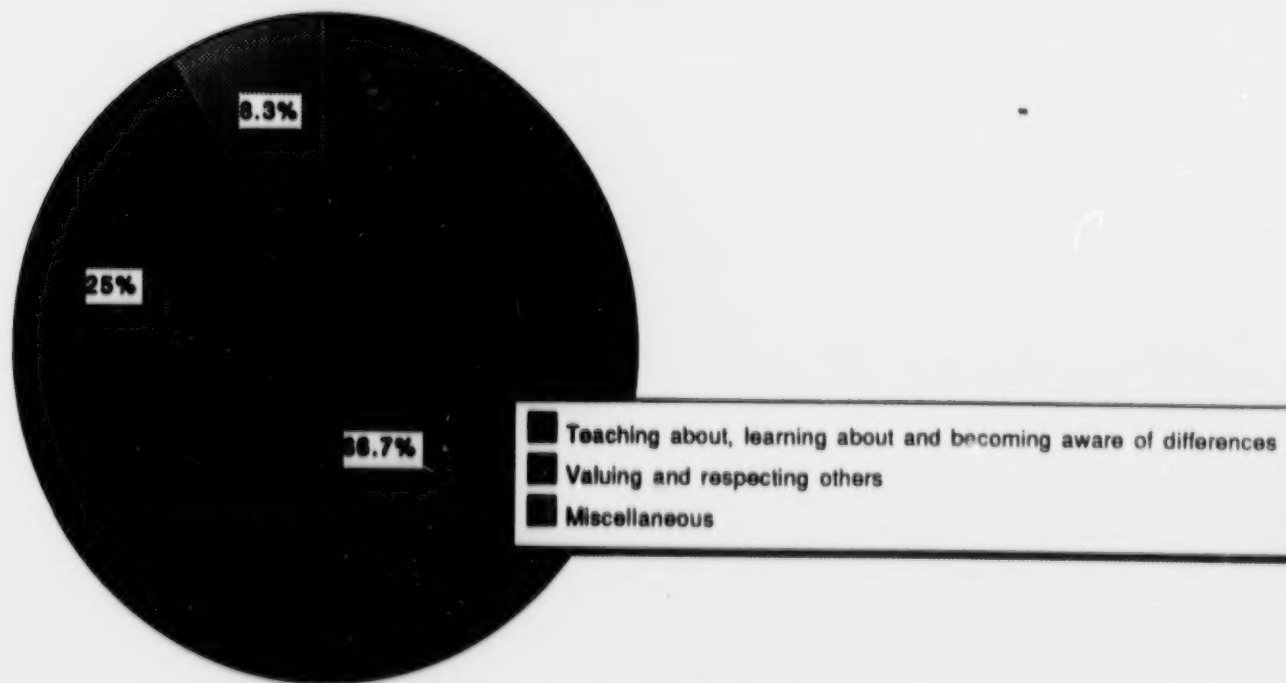


Chart 2

Why Staff Members Think Multicultural Education is Important at Woods Elementary

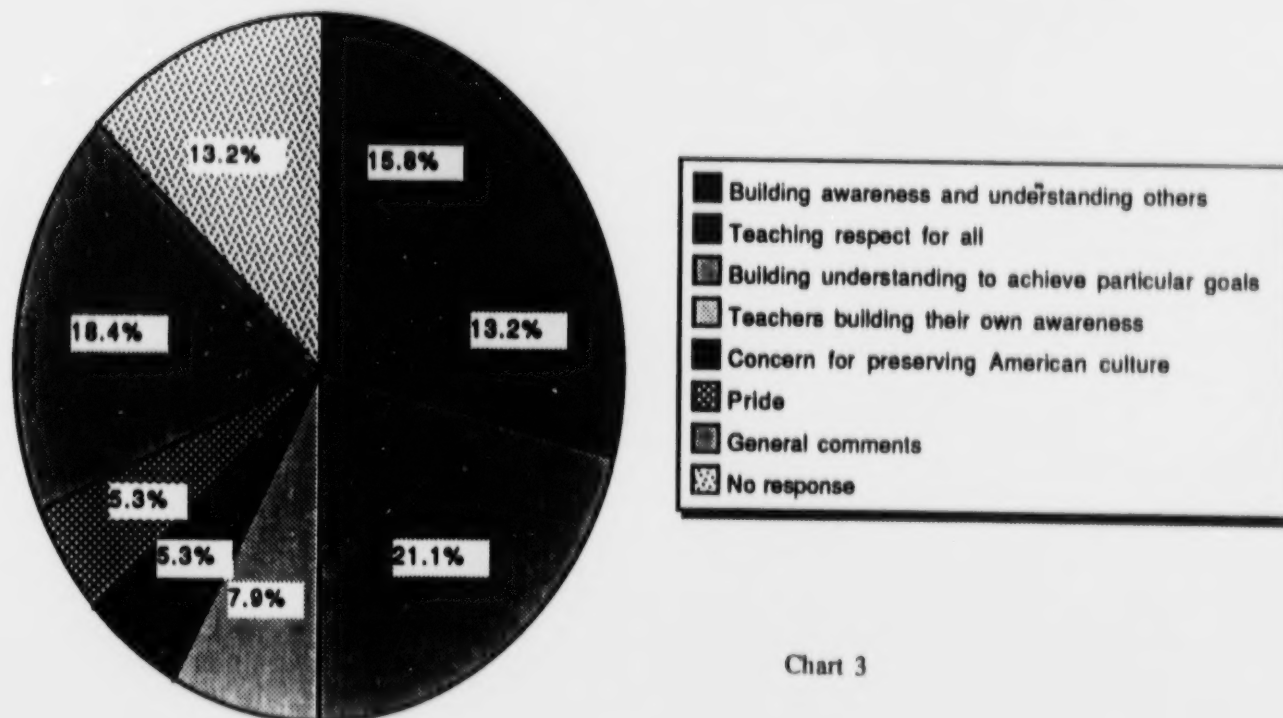


Chart 3

Why Staff Members Think Multicultural Education Is Important at Jones Elementary

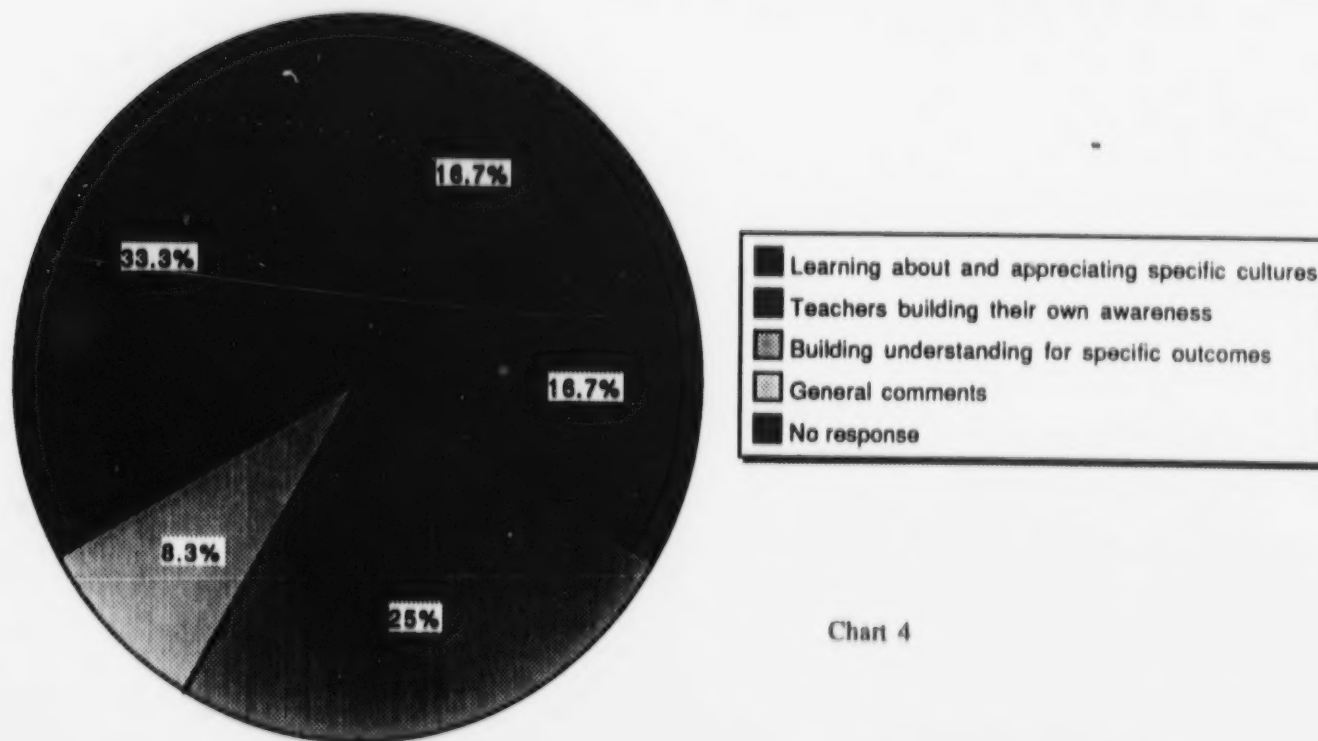


Chart 4

How Staff Members Implement Multicultural Education at Woods Elementary

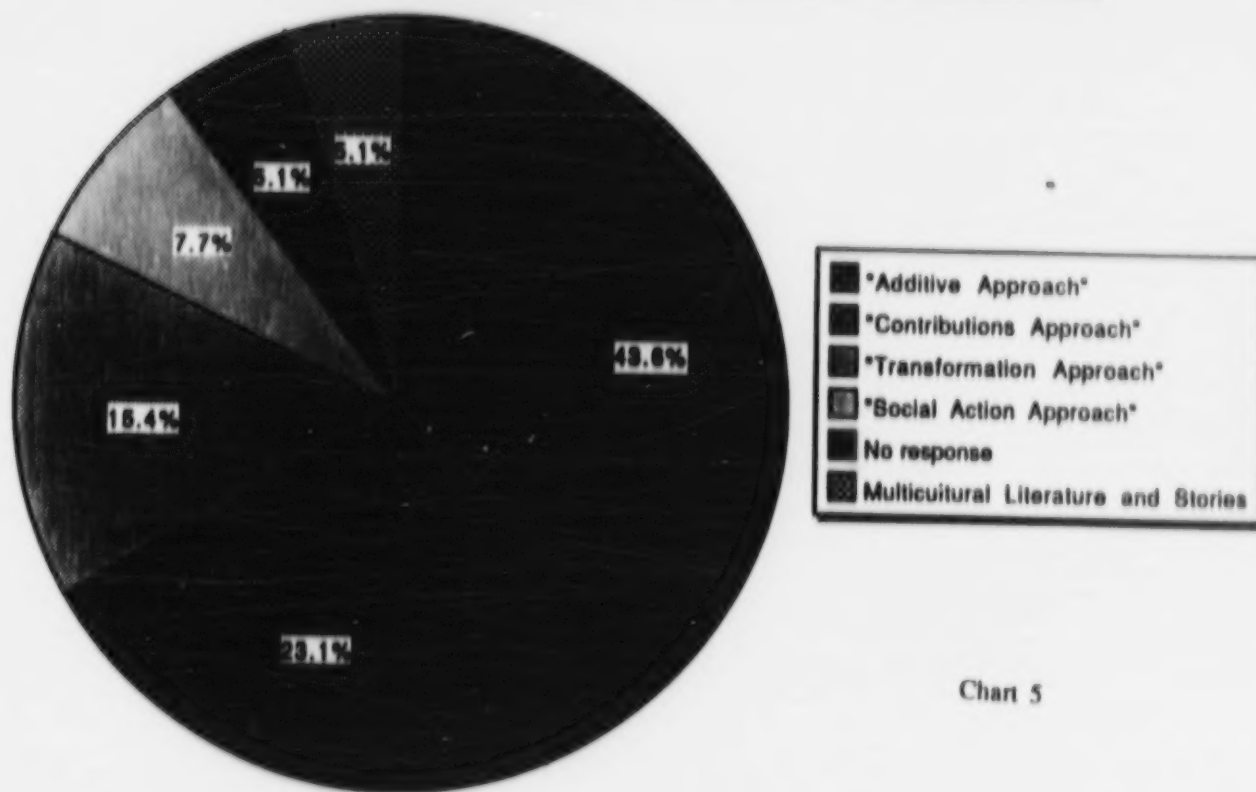


Chart 5

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How Staff Members Implement Multicultural Education at Jones Elementary

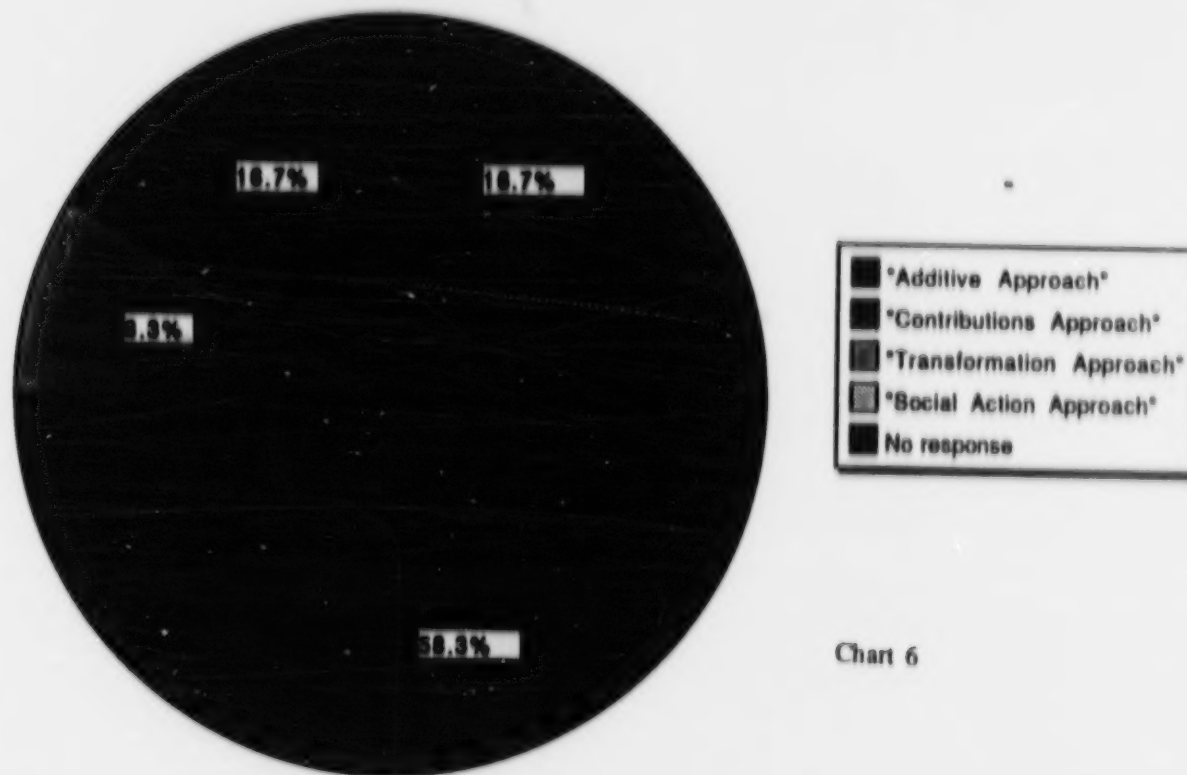


Chart 6

VII. Conclusion:

After examining the thoughts of principals and staff members at two different schools, I conclude that staff members are generally willing to incorporate multicultural education into their curriculum. However, educators' ideologies and implementation of multicultural education vary greatly from school to school and from classroom to classroom. This is not surprising, given that there is little agreement in the literature about the concept of multicultural education. If the people in my study are going to progress, they must begin to communicate with each other about the concepts of multicultural education, using a common language. In other words, they need a public definition of the concept.

One way to encourage the formation of such a definition is to define multicultural education in terms of its critical and variable attributes. I would propose that discussion groups be established to undertake this task. These groups should include people from different points of view (e. g. , parents, teachers, students, principals, teacher educators) who are committed to reaching consensus about: 1) the definition of multicultural education, and 2) the types of observable actions that might demonstrate that people have integrated this definition into their teaching.

Once teachers begin to implement this working definition in their classrooms, they need to meet periodically to discuss their problems and successes in doing so. These sessions might be

facilitated by individuals who were involved in the formation of the working definition. Sessions would allow teachers to refine their thinking about multicultural education and to think about specific ways that they might improve their teaching. Communication, then, will be critical to the success of such an endeavor.

Educators play an important role in the shaping of children's knowledge, attitudes, and beliefs. Efforts such as the one I propose should help teachers focus more clearly on their goals and to critically examine their classroom practices so they might capitalize on their opportunities to make a difference in students' lives.

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IX. Appendixes:

Appendix A:

A copy of the survey is below:

1. What is your definition of multicultural education?
2. Do you think multicultural education is an important issue?
[] Yes [] No Why/Why not?
3. Does your school have a person or persons who provides your teachers with assistance in the area of multicultural education? [] Yes [] No
4. How would you describe the extent to which multicultural education is implemented in your classroom? Select the level that best describes your approach to multicultural education. Place a check by the level(1) that best describes your classroom overall.

- ___ Level 1 The Contributions Approach (focuses on heroes, holidays and discrete cultural elements)
- ___ Level 2 The Additive Approach (content, concepts, themes, and perspectives are added to the curriculum without changing its structure)
- ___ Level 3 The Transformation Approach (the structure of the curriculum is changed to enable students to view concepts, issues, events, and themes from the perspectives of diverse ethnic, gender and cultural groups)
- ___ Level 4 The Social Action Approach (students make decisions on important social issues and take action to solve them)

Based on Banks' (1989) levels of integration of ethnic content

5. Does your school provide staff development opportunities for you in the area of multicultural education? [] Yes [] No
6. Would you like information regarding staff development opportunities in the area of multicultural education?
[] Yes [] No

7. Do you have multicultural activities, staff development, materials or personnel, etc., within your building that you would like to share with other schools? ☐ Yes ☐ No

8. Do you see any major barriers to implementing multicultural education in your school? ☐ Yes ☐ No Please explain.

9. Would you like technical assistance in the area of multicultural education? ☐ Yes ☐ No

10. Would you be willing to attend a workshop on multicultural education? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Appendix B:

Data from the surveys:

RESORTING AND RECLASSIFYING RESPONSES

B. Borland

School # 1, Woods Elementary: 40 responses (faculty & staff)

School #2, Jones Elementary: 13 responses (faculty & staff)
(principal's surveys included)

What is your definition of multicultural education?

School #1....

Grouping #1: Teaching about, learning about, and becoming aware of differences

1. You learn about the cultures of others.
5. Education that explores/discusses/recognizes the differences of the people of the world.
6. Education that involves the cultures of many diverse groups.
7. To educate students of cultural differences and to make one's awareness of similarities between cultures increase.
10. Incorporating as many perspectives into classroom discussion and activity as possible. Multicultural education is teaching understanding.
11. When one becomes aware of the diversity of others on an ongoing basis.
14. You learn about races.
16. The exploration of different cultures, different groups of people and their customs/behaviors.
17. Learning about all cultures.
18. Multicultural education is learning about each country, its background, and their traditions and how they live.
22. Becoming aware of likenesses and differences in people and bringing cultural background into the curriculum.
33. Involving many beliefs and customs, not only in involving but including these beliefs and customs into our daily curriculum.

35. Multicultural education is including information on many cultures and by many different groups in my daily lesson plans.

Grouping #2: Valuing and respecting others

2. Teaching students to respect and appreciate all people no matter what cultural/ethnic backgrounds they come from.

3. To educate children to acknowledge and respect the many different cultures that make up our country as well as other countries.

4. Education which values the basic human condition.

7. Learning about various cultures and beliefs will make you respect others' point of view.

8. Education that is for all children-celebrating each person's uniqueness. We are, each of us, special and each have contributions to make the world a better place.

9. It is an understanding and appreciation of cultures other than the majority one.

12. Trying to see people as individuals, with different backgrounds, using them to everyone's advantage.

21. Multicultural education is an attempt to open minds to diverse cultures- ways of living, perspectives, traditions, ethics, relative importance. I would hope we would look for common threads, be challenged to question our own and celebrate the difference in love and acceptance.

23. The understanding of all cultures and how we can work together.

24. Education that takes into consideration the diverse nature of students and capitalizes on the differences, teaching appreciation for others.

25. Multicultural education includes and gives dignity to all cultures, provides children with a deeper understanding of others, and creates an atmosphere of acceptance and compassion for all human beings.

26. Education that develops an awareness, in students, of other cultures as well as their own and enables students to understand and appreciate differences.

- 27. Multicultural education is weaving customs, literature, art, music, etc. of different cultures into a classroom curriculum. Its goal is to help children respect accept and appreciate different cultures.
- 30. Learning to respect other's views than your own.
- 31. Multicultural education is making students aware of differences and helping them develop an appreciation of differences.
- 32. Educating with awareness and respect for the many diverse cultures that make our world.
- 34. Recognizing the differences of various cultures and valuing the beliefs of these cultures, studying differences with acceptance and respect.

Grouping #3: Educating people from different backgrounds

- 19. To develop an awareness and gather knowledge about cultures and to acquire the skills necessary to teach classes of culturally diverse students as well as to teach students about various cultures.
- 13. It is educating all people of all cultures. With this staff, it is speaking of children.
- 28. Educating students who come from differing backgrounds with considerations given to cultural differences.
- 29. Teaching a diverse group of children with different ethnic backgrounds.

Grouping #4: Misc.

- 20. Education that is sensitive to the contributions, beliefs, customs, etc. of all groups of people.
- 36. Multicultural education to me is defined as different mixtures of studying cultures of other people through various courses or interaction with different ethnic groups.
- 15. Being able to address all academic and behavioral areas in a fair, non prejudiced manner taking into consideration all ethnic, religious and racial groups' needs and problems.

Principal's response:

Multicultural education is the integration and appreciation of other cultures into the regular curriculum; offering a better understanding

of the diversity within our own society and helping reduce prejudice among us because of those differences.

School #2....

Grouping #1: Teaching about, learning about, and becoming aware of differences [content centered]

4. Multicultural education is the integration of different cultures and events into your curriculum.
5. Education provided for all students about the different cultures of all people, their native lands, both past and present, and their contributions to society.
7. Education given to all students about the different lives, past and present, to all people.
11. Multicultural education is making students aware of other cultures by exposing them to models (pictures, actual people) from different cultures. Models should be non-stereotypical! Children need to see more than just ceremonial dress and behavior.
13. The recognition of and exposure to activities from various cultures and ethnic groups within and beyond the classroom. (customs, food, clothing, arts, etc.)
12. Educating people about various cultural backgrounds, appreciating their differences and comparing to ones own.
8. Multicultural education is a field of knowledge of various cultures and experiences of people.
9. Multicultural education is the study of diverse cultures.

Grouping #2: Valuing and respecting others [person-centered]

2. Multicultural education is recognizing, valuing, celebrating, and teaching about the array of values, customs and lifestyles of the varied cultures that make up our everyday world.
3. Multicultural education is helping everyone respect each other personally and the cultures of widely diverse backgrounds.
6. Multicultural education is providing a program which is genuinely committed to a diverse mind set, which teaches all to be sensitive,

responsive, and supportive to all persons and is authentic in its response to issues and confronting them.

Grouping #3: Misc.

10. Multicultural education is appreciating the diversity of different cultural backgrounds. It is a very vague term.

Principal's response:

Multicultural education is a program that clearly represents the diversity of its people. It is open, supportive, and responsive.

Responses to question #2...

Do you think multicultural education is an important issue?

Why/why not

School #1:

Grouping #1: There is importance in understanding others. [Building awareness and understanding]

2. I think it is important to understand each other.... and know more about all cultures.

3. It brings together all and helps each understand other ways of living.

8. It is important to understand others beliefs and lifestyles.

11. The world is smaller. The more we know about others, the better we understand one another.

20. This is a very important issue. People should become aware of others cultures and their beliefs.

23. Because each one of us is unique and different in our own ways and people need to be aware of the likes and dislikes of everyone. We as a culture need to be more understanding.

Grouping #2: Teaching respect for all

14. People need to respect other cultures. One way to achieve this is by exposing children in school to other ideas and celebrations so as to broaden their view to the diversity of different groups.

- 26. Our children need to grow up with positive attitudes and respect for each other.
- 27. All people value their heritage and can gain more understanding about their neighbors(classmates) with instruction. Childhood is the time to build bridges of respect for diversity.
- 28. Because we must learn to respect one another for who we are.
- 32. We have tried to think that everyone is the same but we need to recognize and respect the differences.

Grouping #3: Building understanding to achieve particular goals.

- 7. It increases sensitivity, openness, honesty, and makes aware of our own ignorance.
- 24. reduces ignorance and attitudes based on lack of knowledge...compassionate, nurturing, safe environment....dignity
- 12. It's important because the more we know about others, the better we understand one another, and make the world a better place.
- 19. I think multicultural education must be an issue. We need to develop an understanding and appreciation for differences. Multicultural education is the doorway into a peaceful future.
- 21. Yes, because we can learn more about each group and how to get together on issues.
- 22. To enhance/improve ones awareness of cultural diversities. To help make the world a better place.
- 31. Multicultural education is an important issue because our survival as a society is contingent on working with all individuals.
- 33. To reduce prejudice and make children aware at an early age of different cultures and to help them develop an appreciation for these differences.

Grouping #4: Teachers building their own awareness...[professional development]

- 6. All students need to become aware of their own personal cultural heritage. Teachers/educators need to be aware of their own culture before they can become skilled in multicultural education.

18. The "salad" rather than the "melting pot" way of thinking is fairly new to me. I am always trying to increase my awareness.

30. Because we all have biases we need to be aware of since we as teachers play such an important role in influencing young people.

Grouping #5: Concern about retaining the "American Culture"

5. But, we must also remember our country was formed on some basic principles. We don't want to lose "The American Culture." I think we can do both.

9. All people should learn of their backgrounds and the legacy that was left to them by their forefathers. However, we should not neglect the American Culture. Being more loyal to another country than to America is a destructive thing.

Grouping #6: Pride (in general)

1. All children have a right to feel proud of their identify/heritage.

4. Because every child needs to feel a sense of pride and respect in themselves whether they are black, white, Chinese or whatever nationality they may be.

Grouping #7: General comments

10. There is so much to learn from other cultures.

13. Most of our children come from backgrounds with very limited resources, multicultural education gives them more of a sense of themselves, and a broader perspective of the world.

15. Because it is very educational to know these things about other people.

16. We are all on this earth as equals and need to feel that our needs and wants are as important as the next group.

17. I believe all young children should accept each other regardless of cultural differences. We are a family in the classroom and each child is treated like a member of our family. That might be called multicultural-it's not the name I give to it.

25. All children's culture needs to be included when planning the curriculum. Children have different learning styles which needs to be addressed.

29. Without a question it is important considering the vastly different, diverse population which makes up our world and classrooms.

Principal's response:

With our society becoming such a diverse one, it is important for us so that we can appreciate each other. With this appreciation comes a better understanding which could lead more towards a peaceful society.

School #2:

Grouping #1: Learning about and appreciating specific cultures...directed against the Euro-centric approach

7. It is extremely important for everyone to learn and appreciate the culture of blacks, whites, Mexicans, the Chinese and other nationalities.

8. We should know about all cultures. Blacks learn about all white cultures, but whites are not taught about all cultures.

Grouping #2: Teachers building their own awareness...[professional development]

1. Because most good educators realize that a teacher who has demonstrated cultural biases toward a child can have detrimental effects on the child's and the classmate's development.

6. I think that ignorance of this issue especially in a school setting causes us not to deal with reality and also can cause feelings of exclusion, anger and alienation.

Grouping #3: Building understanding for specific outcomes

2. To rid prejudice of other cultures. (outcome) To teach children to be open minded to others' ideas and beliefs. (action)

3. Teach tolerance and understanding of people's differences, as well as each person's important part in society. (related to awareness)
4. Education will hopefully alleviate prejudice by promoting understanding.

Grouping #4: General comments

5. We live in a shrinking world.

Principal's response:

For too long, educational institutions of all levels have presented their curriculum in a "Euro-centric" style, ignoring peoples of other lands and places.

Appendix C:

A Selection Of Culturally Diverse Children's Literature

Books with African or African-American Characters....

A. Adler, D. A Picture Book Of Martin Luther King, Jr., New York: Holiday House, 1989.

B. 7-11 years

C. A brief-illustrated biography of Martin Luther King, Jr., Baptist minister, civil-rights leader, and human being extraordinaire.

D. This is yet another biography, by Adler, in his picture book biography series on famous Americans. Filled with straightforward facts, partnered with corresponding illustrations, Adler informs his audience about Dr. King. Casilla has done a fine job illustrating; A Picture Book Of Martin Luther King, Jr. ; I particularly like his depiction of the March On Washington and boycott illustrations. Adler's biography on King would provide good instruction for second or third graders who were interested in learning about distinguished Americans.

A. Bang, M. Ten. Nine. Eight, New York: Puffin Books, 1983.

B. 3-6 years

C. A daddy and his daughter count down to bedtime.

D. Molly Bang has created a delightfully simple counting book. ["4 sleepy eyes which open and close"] Her bold, rich illustrations alternate every other page. The black print is easy to read; the numerals are larger than the print and brightly colored. This book would be a good opening activity on a lesson on counting; it would also make a super bedtime story. Notably, this book portrays a daddy putting his little girl to bed.

A. Caines, J. Abby, New York: Harper & Row, 1973.

B. 4-8 years

C. This is a story about love and an adopted little girl named Abby.

D. Jeanette Caines and Steven Kellogg have teamed up to create a pleasing story about an adopted little girl and her family. They talk about and do everyday things like.....unloading groceries, getting dressed, reading books, arguing and painting. The subject matter, adoption, and Kellogg's pictures, which portray the family's love and close feelings for one another, are what makes this book so special. Abby is a must for a unit of study on families; it would also be exceptional for discussing adoption with a young child.

A. Cameron, A. Julian, Dream Doctor, New York: Random House, 1990.

B. 7-9 years

C. Two boys search for the perfect birthday present for their father.

D. Julian, Dream Doctor is part of the Julian series. Julian and his brother, Huey, get into mischief and REALLY use their imaginations when trying to find a present for their Dad. This a good book for children just getting into chapter books, as the chapters are short and concise. Most children will relate to the common activities and the imaginative minds of the characters in this story. I particularly like the way Julian describes his Dad in the story, and Ann Strugnell's pencil illustrations. ,

A. Clifton, L. Everett Anderson's Goodbye, New York: Holt, Rinehart, & Winston, 1983.

B. 4-8 years

C. A young boy tries to deal with his father's death.

D. Before Lucille Clifton begins Everett Anderson's Goodbye, she lists the five stages of grief: denial, anger, bargaining, depression, and acceptance. Her rhyming text about Everett takes on the form of a poem. Ann Grifaloni's sketches help Clifton set the mood for this work. Lucille Clifton should be commended for creating a book that directly deals with the loss of a parent.

A. Flournoy, V. The Patchwork Quilt, New York: Dial Books, 1985.

B. 5-8 years

C. With old scraps of clothing, a young girl, Tanya, helps her grandmother create a beautiful quilt.

D. The Patchwork Quilt is a Reading Rainbow book and it won the Coretta Scott King award. I really liked the messages in this book, but I thought that it was rather long winded. New things are nice, but handmade things often last longer and have greater sentimental value. I like the respect that the little girl displayed toward her grandmother. I like the way the family pitched in and helped make the quilt, when the grandmother was ill. If all families were a little like this family the world would be a better place.

A. Freeman, D. A Pocket For Corduroy, New York: The Viking Press, 1978.

B. 4-6 years

C. A personified toy bear desperately wants a pocket, so he searches a Laundromat to find one.

D. A Pocket For Corduroy is a successful sequel to Corduroy. It is a story about a girl and her teddy bear, that is filled with love and compassion. This children's book has quite a bit of suspense as the reader wonders if Lisa and Corduroy will find each other again, after Corduroy is lost. The lesson this tale provides reminds children not to wander away from their parents. It is a notable read-aloud book especially during a unit study on teddy bears.

A. Greenfield, E. Grandmama's Joy, New York: Philomel Books, 1980.

B. 5-8 years

C. A little girl tries to cheer up her aging grandmother, who is her caregiver. This is a lovely story about a special relationship between a granddaughter and her grandmother.

D. Grandmama's Joy is the product of two very talented people: Eloise Greenfield and Carole Byard, both well-known in the area of children's literature. This book is quite timely with so many children being raised by grandparents, today. Raised children is not an easy thing, but Rhondy reminds her sad grandmama that they do have the most important thing in life...one another. Carole Byard should be commended for her rich charcoal drawings which display the closeness of the relationship between the two characters in Grandmama's Joy.

A. Greenfield, E. Honey, I Love And Other Love Poems, New York: Harper, 1976.

B. 6-9 years

C. A collection of sixteen love poems.

D. Written and illustrated by African-Americans, this collection of short poems is about jump ropes, relatives, music, summer, trains, friends, and other things that children love. Honey, I Love And Other Love Poems also displays melancholy feelings. I particularly like Greenfield's poem *I Look Pretty*, that depicts a young child playing 'dress-up' in her mother's clothes. Greenfield's poem entitled *Harriet Tubman* briefly and skillfully explains of Tubman's courageous travels. Diane and Leo Dillon decorate the pages, filled with Greenfield's words, with pencil sketches of children and child-like drawings.

A. Hale, S.J. Mary Had A Little Lamb, New York: Scholastic, 1990.

B. 3-5 years

C. A well-known poem about a little girl who befriends a lamb.

D. Featuring a brightly clothed African-American girl in a New England town, this version of Mary Had A Little Lamb is my personal favorite. Bruce McMillian, a talented photo-illustrator, has created a contemporary book with the original version poem. It would be splendid to read this aloud to preschoolers; I guarantee they'll say read it again. Superwords and Eating Fractions are two other impressive books photo-illustrated by Bruce McMillian.

A. Havill, J. Jamaica Tag-Along, Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1989.

B. 4-6 years

C. Jamaica's older brother doesn't allow her to play ball with him and his friends, so she finds another playmate.

D. Havill's characters in Jamaica Tag-Along are seem real ; they get themselves involved in a lifelike issue. Every child has to go through rejection at some stage; Havill's book offers the reader a chance to think about it impersonally through Jamaica and her brother. Personally, I get also excited about this book because it shows interracial children playing together.

A. Hoffman, M. Amazing Grace, New York: Dial, 1991.

B. 5-10 years

C. Even though Grace's classmates say that she cannot be Peter Pan, in the class play, because she is not white or a boy, Grace finds that she can do anything if she puts her mind to it.

D. Currently, Amazing Grace is my favorite book. It is exceptional, as it deals with prejudice, an often hushed topic. Hoffman's book depicts a young African-American girl who lives with her mother and grandmother; which is commonplace for many young children today. Grace is a beautiful, imaginative, spirited child who overcomes prejudice; Binch has captured Grace's very essence in her watercolor illustrations. In my opinion, this amazing book should have won the Caldecott. However, it was chosen to be featured on Reading Rainbow.

A. Howard, E. Aunt Flossie's Hats (And Crab Cakes Later), New York: Clarion Books, 1991.

B. 7-9 years

C. Two young sisters visit their great-great Aunt on Sundays and listen to stories of long ago.

D. Azure, coral, emerald green, and hot pink fill many of the pages of Elizabeth Howard's story. If this story didn't have any words, James Ransome's vibrant oil paintings could probably tell the story by themselves. The illustrations capture the joy that Susan and Sarah feel when they visit Great-Great Aunt Flossie. It is more than obvious that these two little girls treasure their time with their aunt. This book shows a positive image of an older person, and with an increasing number of children being raised by grandparents this would be a super book to share in almost any classroom.

A. Hudson, W. & Wesley, V. Afro-Bets Book Of Black Heroes From A to Z, New Jersey: Just Us Books, 1988.

B. 9-11 years

C. This alphabet introduces its audience to fifty important black men and women.

D. This book of short informative biographies is long overdue. If you want to read about Jesse Jackson, Rosa Parks, Malcolm X, or Aretha Franklin, this is the book for you. It was written to introduce young children to black heroes and heroines of their day. It has taught me about some famous black people that I have never heard of, like Fanny Coppin, a dedicated educator and former slave who is the namesake for Coppin State College in Baltimore, Maryland. I imagine some of these people in Afro-Bets Book Of Black Heroes From A to Z, omitted from traditional history books. This book is a must for the elementary classroom, especially for the class that is working on biographical reports.

A. Isadora, R. Ben's Trumpet, New York: Greenwillow, 1979.

B. 6-7 years

C. Ben, an imaginary trumpeter, longs to play a real trumpet, like the neighborhood jazz musicians.

D. This is a story for dreamers; it is full of hope. The graphic black and white illustrations fit the mood of Ben's story. Ben's Trumpet would more than likely encourage young, beginning musicians. The musicians' faces are so expressive that you can almost hear their

night club sound, and feel the vibrations. Like the illustrations, the writing in this picture book is sensual.

A. Johnson, A. When I Am Old With You, New York: Orchard Books, 1990.

B. 4-8 years

C. A young child imagines growing old with his grandfather; side by side, they fish, play cards, and catch fireflies.

D. Johnson and Soman have teamed up again to create a warm story about a relationship between a young child and a grandfather. Johnson's story told in first person is love, companionship, and respect. When I Am Old With You is filled with Soman's vivid watercolor illustrations that capture the love expressed by the child. This would be a marvelous book to read during a unit on families as it respects and values older people. Johnson should be commended for her strong, but subtle character development.

A. Keats, E.J. The Snowy Day, New York: Viking Press, 1962.

B. 2-6 years

C. A young boy puts on his red snowsuit, and runs outside to spend the day exploring the snow.

D. Most children love snow; it is beautiful, fresh, and exciting like The Snowy Day. Ezra Jack Keats wrote and illustrated this Caldecott winner in 1962. It reveals a child's wonder about a new fallen snow. As in many of Keats' books, his main characters are children and he does an outstanding job illustrating with collage. I particularly like the illustrations where Peter, the main character, makes angels in the snow, and where he takes a bath. Keats, who passed away in 1983, left a trail of notable books behind for generations of young children; they include Hi, Cat!, Goggles, Jennie's Hat, Maggie's Pirate, Whistle For Willie, The Pet Show, and Apt. 3. To extend these books for 6 and 7 year-old children, a teacher might use these creations for an author study. Younger children could use this read aloud book during a study on weather. I admire Keats for his portrayal of black children in his stories.

A. Marzollo, J. Happy Birthday, Martin Luther King, New York: Scholastic, 1993.

B. 4-7 years

C. It is an introduction to Dr. Martin Luther King, a great civil rights leader. It explains why his birthday is a holiday.

D. Unique to most picture books, Marzollo begins this book with a sensitive forward, for parents and teachers, regarding the words "shot and killed." She should be commended for her concern about the well-being of her readers. Young readers can relate to this biographical, celebratory book, because the text is clear and it is easy to read. The information provided is accurate. The illustrator, Brian Pinkney, used oil pastels and scratch board, to create the impressive images in this picture book. His artwork is surprisingly unusual. Pinckney's stained glass windows and realistic, expressive characters amaze me.

A. Moutoussamy-Ashe, J. Daddy And Me, New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1993.

B. 7-9 years

C. A photo story of Arthur Ashe, tennis great and humanitarian, and his daughter, Camera.

D. What a touching story and a great way to educate young children about people with AIDS. Acclaimed photographer, Jeanne Ashe has created a black and white photo essay about the love that her husband and daughter shared and a deadly disease. Daddy And Me begins with a note from the author. It could be used with children under the age of seven, but remember the conceptually difficult subject matter, AIDS. This biographical story helps develop empathy for those who live with AIDS and their families. It won't leave you with dry eyes.

A. Polacco, P. Chicken Sunday, New York: Philomel Books, 1992.

B. 6-8 years

C. Three 'related' young children sell decorated eggs, and buy a hat for a special lady who cooks delicious Sunday chicken dinners for them.

D. Author and illustrator, Patricia Polacco has written a beautiful story of trust, acceptance and love. Polacco reached into her childhood to weave this story, as well as, a spider weaves a web. The pages are filled with vibrant watercolors that show great expressions on the faces of the characters and emotion. The young girl and her

neighbors, two boys, get into mischief , attend church, eat Sunday chicken, and decorate Easter eggs, among other things. Polacco, of Ukranian decent, should be commended for sharing her beautiful childhood experience with us.

A. Taylor, M. Roll Of Thunder. Hear My Cry, New York: Dial, 1976.

B. 11-13 years

C. This is a story of a black family and their courageous struggle to survive the threats of their white neighbors, and save their land during the Depression.

D. Roll Of Thunder. Hear My Cry is an incredibly well-written story filled with courage and pride. Her characters accurately portray life for many blacks during the Depression. Racial prejudice and deliberate exclusion are seen through the eyes of Cassie Logan, a nine-year-old black girl from Mississippi. She is an intensely strong young girl who confronts injustice and believes in family. This would be a marvelous text for sixth graders to read-aloud. It would open their eyes, while casting light on the problems many minorities face. After reading this novel, the reader will most likely gain empathy for others who suffer from oppression. The visual imagery created by Taylor is spectacular; after reading Roll Of Thunder. Hear My Cry the reader could probably draw the setting to a tee. Mildred Taylor won the Newberry award for this heart-felt book in 1977.

A. Williams, S. Working Cotton, Florida: Harcourt Brace, and Jovanovich, 1992.

B. 4-8 years

C. A young black girl tells of the daily events of her family's migrant life in the cotton fields of Fresno, California.

D. Williams' Working Cotton deserves its recognition as a Caldecott honor book. Through the portrayal of her true characters, the readers gain a deep understanding of migrant life. Byard has done a superb job contrasting light and dark in her acrylic paintings; warm colors are dominant in her beautiful, expressive paintings. This is a effective tribute to migrant workers, and might help encourage the acceptance of diverse family life. Williams was also given the Coretta Scott King honor award for this book.

A. Udry, J. M. What Mary Jo Shared, New York: Scholastic, 1966.

B. 5-7 years

C. Shy Mary Jo is disheartened when she cannot find anything to share with her class that hasn't already been shared. After much frustration, she finally finds a unique solution.

D. What Mary Jo Shared is special because it deals with fear and shyness, two emotions that often go undiscussed. The plot is suspenseful as the reader wonders if Mary Jo will ever share something with her classmates. It is a must for every kindergarten, as it features a heart warming relationship between beautiful African-American girl and her daddy.

Books With Native-American Characters....
(Eskimo/Native American Indian)

A. Aliko, Corn Is Maize: The Gift Of The Indians, New York: Thomas Y. Crowell, 1976.

B. 5-8 years.

C. This picture book is all about the history of corn and why it is important to people.

D. If you are going to do a unit of study on the importance of plants, this book would aid your investigation. Making popcorn or cornbread would be an appropriate and fun activity to follow this story. Like most corn the illustrations in Corn Is Maize...are yellow and green. Accomplished author-illustrator has created many informative non-fiction books, among them are Digging For Dinosaurs, My Hands, and My Feet.

A. Goble, P. The Girl Who Loved Wild Horses, Scarsdale, New York: Bradbury Press, 1979.

B. 7-9 years

C. A lost girl finds her family, but prefers to live among the wild horses, free and happy.

D. Well-known for his books portraying Native-American tales, Paul Goble has created a story of a girl, who gave up life among her people to live with horses she so dearly loves. The angular images on the pages of The Girl Who Loved Wild Horses almost jump off of the pages. There are many animals including prairie dogs, buffalo, quail, eagles and, of course, horses in this Caldecott winner. There are

teepees in this story; please note, most Indians do not live in teepees, today.

A. Luenn, N. Nessa's Fish, New York: Atheneum, 1990.

B. 6-8 years

C. Nessa tries to save the fish she and her grandmother caught while ice fishing, from animals who want to eat them. They are to share with their Eskimo village.

D. This is the first children's book I've seen with ice fishing in it! Luenn shares a part of life in Arctic regions that many people might not otherwise hear of. Nessa's fish focuses on bravery, helping the elderly, and sharing with neighbors; there are indeed a handful of lessons to be learned from this book. The illustrations could almost tell the story by themselves. Her book has a unique layout where each picture spans two pages and runs off their edges. A 2 inch vertical slice is taken out of the each picture; this white space contains the text.

A. Martin, B. & Archambault, J. Knots On A Counting Rope, New York: Henry Holt & Co., 1966/1987.

B. 7-9 years

C. A Native-American boy and his grandfather sit by the campfire and tell stories.

D. Knots On A Counting Rope is a story of love, hope and courage. The young blind boy in this story loves to hear his grandfather's stories of his birth, their family, and horses. Ted Rand has done a fantastic job contrasting light and dark in this story; I love the way he shows campfire light in the faces of the characters. **Several notes** The authors imply the boy in this story is blind. Adding knots to the counting rope symbolized the passage of time in this story. "Native Americans have objected to the portrayal of the tribal life in this book. They maintain that no Native American child would interrupt his grandfather as the boy does in this story, since elders are always respected." (Huck, Hepler, & Hickman, (1961, 1993) Children's Literature In The Elementary School, New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanich, p. 273.)

A. Rogers, J. Runaway Mittens, New York: Greenwillow Books, 1988.

B. 5-8 years

C. A young Eskimo boy, Pica, is constantly losing his mittens, in strange places. One time he even finds them keeping newly born puppies warm. What will he do?

D. Runaway Mittens is a story about family-life in a colder region of North America focusing on misplacing items, a common thing that happens to many people. Alaskan artist, Rie Munoz, has created soft cartoon-like illustration for Runaway Mittens; she has also incorporated a lot of white into her illustrations, which gives the reader a sense of the cold weather. I particularly like the pictures where Pica is hugging his grandmother around the neck, and where the family is going off on an ice-fishing adventure. The plot and character development, leaves a bit to be desired, in my opinion.

A. Speare, E. The Sign Of The Beaver, New York: Dell , 1983.

B. 10-13 years

C. A twelve-year-old boy is left, by his father, in the Maine wilderness to fend for himself, while his father fetches his family. Surprisingly, Indians come to his aid, when he has difficulties surviving on his own.

D. The Sign Of The Beaver is a story of trust, survival, and companionship. It shows how people can learn from and benefit from knowing people that are different from themselves. Matt teaches Attean English, while Attean teaches Matt secrets of the forest. The characters have depth and are believable. Speare's story flows well through chapter, after chapter. She should be commended for the development of characters, Matt and Attean, in this text.

Books With A Hispanic Influence....

A. Angeles, M. Tortilla For Emilia, New York: Sundance Publishers, 1992.

B. 4-7 years

C. Emilia, a Mexican-American girl invites her friends to her birthday party. She asks her guests to bring a pancake-like food from a different culture.

D. I would not recommend this book. Tortilla For Emilia attempts at pointing out similarities in cultures. It essentially has no plot. The story is dry and the characters are flat. The only value that I see in this book is a repeated refrain that would help emergent readers read this book.

A. Brown, T. Hello, Amigos!, New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1986.

B. 5-8 years

C. This photo-essay follows a day in the life of a Mexican-American boy named Frankie Valdez, this day just happens to be his birthday.

D. Hello, Amigos! tells the reader what life is like for Frankie Valdez, a young member of a large family in San Francisco. Frankie explains all about his school where his teacher speaks two languages, like him and what he does after school. This story also contains parts of Frankie's social customs and traditions, like breaking piñatas and listening to a mariachi sing. Fran Ortiz's black and white photographs capture the essence of Frankie's life. At the end of Hello, Amigos! there is a glossary to help the reader pronounce and understand the Spanish words in the text.

A. Ets, M. Gilberto And The Wind, New York: Viking Press, 1963.

B. 3-7 years

C. A little boy spends a day playing with the wind.

D. "You-ou-ou-ou, " it's the call of the wind. Illustrator and author, Marie Ets, has created a delightful story about Gilberto, a little boy, who discovers the good and bad things about the wind. He likes the wind when it helps him move a pinwheel and sail a boat, but he doesn't like the wind when it knocks down fences and breaks trees. Notably, Uts uses only black, white and shades of brown to illustrate the pages of Gilberto And The Wind.

A. Garza, Carmen, Family Pictures/Cuadros de familia, San Francisco: Children's Book Press, 1990.

B. 7-10 years.

C. The author shares some of her childhood experiences growing up in a Hispanic community in Kingsville, Texas.

D. Mexican folk art paintings and bilingual text fill the pages of this authentic piece of children's literature. Family Pictures/Cuadros de familia is set up like a photo-scrapbook, with paintings instead of photographs. It shares real depictions of Hispanic family and community life....making tamales, preparing for bed, eating watermelon on the front porch, having a birthday party and going to a fair. This book is a super way to get a small slice of Hispanic-American life.

A. Williams, V. A Chair For My Mother, New York: Greenwillow Books, 1982.

B. 5-8 years

C. A family of three saves money in a jar to buy a chair that was lost in the fire.

D. Sometimes, being patient is one of the hardest things in life to do.

A Chair For My Mother is about patience, as the tender Hispanic family must fill a jar with dimes before buying a beautiful armchair. It would be a great book to teach children about saving money for something that they really want. Vera Williams filled the colorful pages of this Caldecott Honor book with love and the notion that life's little pleasures are often the greatest. Williams has also created interesting border around the pages of her book.

A. Williams, V. Something Special For Me, New York: Greenwillow Books, 1983.

B. 5-8 years

C. With only three days until her birthday, Rosa has difficulty deciding what to get for her birthday.

D. Vera B. Williams has created another delightful story about Rosa and her family. The reader comes to understand that Rosa, a careful decision maker, likes roller skates, dress clothes, camping, and most of all accordions. It is evident that Rosa is a part of a warm and loving family. Once again, Williams has created her signature borders around sensitive watercolor illustrations. This sequel book to A Chair For My Mother is worth sharing with youngsters, especially those who are learning about saving money.

Books With A Caribbean Influence...

A. Joseph, L. A Wave In Her Pocket, New York: Clarion Books, 1991.

B. 10-13 years.

C. A collection of six stories, told by a tantie or grandaunt; the origins of these stories are from Trinidad and the West Africa.

D. Lynn Joseph shares a marvelous collection of tantie stories with her audience that are highlighted by Brian Pinckney's scratchboard illustrations. Some of these stories are scary and some are funny, but they are all delightful. A Wave In Her Pocket is dressed with the cadence of Island speech; it is an honor to the rich tradition of

folklore. Due to the stories' authenticity, some of the Island words(chip-chip, cricket wickets, pirogue etc.) will need to be looked up in the glossary at the end of the book.

- A. Joseph, L. Coconut Kind Of Day, New York: Puffin Books, 1990.
- B. 3-8 years
- C. A collection of Caribbean poems for children
- D. Raised in Trinidad, the author has decided to share some memories of her childhood in the Caribbean with young children. This is the first illustrating that I have seen by Sandra Speidel; her authentic, pastel drawings reveal the bright colors of the Caribbean islands. This would be an excellent book to share with older children who were studying the Caribbean. Lynn Joseph's poems help the reader understand aspects of Caribbean life and feel the sounds of the Trinidad. I particularly like Johnson's poem *Steel Drum*. On the last page of the book, Lynn Johnson explains some terms that the reader may be unfamiliar with like the palet man, who is the ice cream man.

- A. Lessac, F. My Little Island, New York: Harper & Row, 1984.
- B. 5-8 years
- C. A little boy and his best friend visit an island in the Caribbean where he was born.
- D. My Little Island is a wonderful portrayal of life on a Caribbean island. The boy's feelings toward the island show as he explains to his friend, Lucca, all about the on-goings on the island. The bright and neon colored illustrations show many intricate details of the special places one might find on a Caribbean island. To encourage writing in your classroom, you might have your students write a story about just one picture.

Books With Asian or Asian-American Characters....

- A. Bang, M. The Paper Crane New York: Greenwillow, 1985.
- B. 5-7 years
- C. A stranger enters a restaurant. and pays for his meal with a paper crane. Magically, the crane becomes mortal and beings to dance.
- D. This ancient Bengali folk tale was told to Molly Bang by her mother. Bang has perked it up with her illustrations that appear three-dimensional. She makes the tale come to life with her collages

that have phenomenal perspective. Bang should be commended for her culturally diverse characters, and for including a map in her picture storybook. Making paper cranes out of origami would be an exciting activity to follow the reading of this book.

A. Demi, Liang And The Magic Paintbrush, New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1980.

B. 5-8 years

C. A poor child longs for the opportunity to paint, one day he is given a magic brush that gives life to what he paints.

D. Liang And The Magic Paintbrush is an old, delightful Chinese tale filled with magic. It must be exciting for young children because a child with magical powers outwits a bad emperor. The detailed watercolor illustrations remind me of Chinese works that I've seen hanging in museums. It would be a great addition to a unit on folk tales around the world.

A. Friedman, I., How My Parents Learned To Eat, Boston: Houghton-Mifflin, 1984.

B. 7-9 years

C. An American sailor dates a Japanese woman, overseas. They both try to learn one another's way of eating, without letting the other one know.

D. This funny book begins by a little girl saying that sometimes they eat with chopsticks and sometimes they eat with forks and knives at her house. How My Parents Learned To Eat is told from the point of view of the daughter of the couple the story is about. There is an element of suspense in the problems that the little girl's mom and dad have when they are dating. The illustration are not Allen Say's best, but the story would be for not without them.

A. Paek, M., Aekyung's Dream, San Francisco, California: Children's Book Press, 1978.

B. 6-9 years

C. A story of a young girl's struggle to adapt to a new life in the United States.

D. Min Paek has written a biographically-inspired story about a young Korean girl who feels out of place in the United States. This is the first story book, for children, I that I have seen that is

simultaneously written in Korean and English. Aekyung's Dream was written, illustrated, and translated into Korean by Min Paek. Min Paek's illustrations are true to her text; I particularly like the way she illustrated Aekyung's hair with shades of indigo and black. Although the main character in this book is Korean, I am certain that Aekyung's Dream would be soothing to many immigrant children who miss their homelands. Notably, it also deals with the stereotype that all people with slanted eyes are Chinese.

A. Say, A. El Chino, Boston, Massachusetts: Houghton-Mifflin, 1990.
B. 6-9 years

C. A biographical story of a Chinese-American named Bill Wong, who becomes a well-known bullfighter in Spain.

D. El Chino taught me about a famous Chinese-American that I'd never heard of.....Bill Wong. I also learned a bit about bullfighting. I am impressed with Say's black and white watercolor illustrations that really look like old photographs. El Chino is a biographical piece of literature that sends the message that you can do almost anything if you put your mind to it.

A. Say, A. Tree Of Cranes, Boston, Massachusetts: Houghton-Mifflin, 1991.

B. 5-8 years.

C. A young Japanese boy learns about Christmas when his mother decorates a tree with candles and paper cranes.

D. Allen Say has done a fine job creating Tree Of Cranes; his watercolor illustrations glow as he shares different parts of two cultures. In this wonderful story, the mother shares a piece of her California childhood with her young son. They work together to create a lovely pine tree with white candles and handmade paper cranes. Say does a nice job developing the character of the young boy. It would also be a super book to share with children in the winter as the snow stops the young boy from being able to fly his kite, but it allows him to make a snowman.

A. Scott, A. On Mother's Lap, New York: Clarion Books, 1972.

B. 3-7 years

C. A little boy finds that his Mother's lap is a wonderful place that can hold many things and a couple of people.

D. On Mother's Lap is a warm book that all children can relate to; it portrays a universal theme.....love. The text is simple, yet quite expressive. The story moves softly from page to page. Glo Coalson's luminous illustrations fill up each entire page, and draw the reader's eyes to the faces of her characters. This would be a good selection to read during a unit on families.

A. Surat, M. Angel Child, Dragon Child, Milwaukee, Wisconsin: Raintree Publishers, 1983.

B. 6-8 years

C. A Vietnamese girl, who has moved to the United States misses her mother, who is still in Vietnam. However, she does meet a new friend.

D. Michelle Surat addresses a real fear of children...being in a new school in a place away from what was home, and being teased. Vo-Dinh Mai's softly-colored sketches set the solemn mood of this story; I think the illustrations aide the text in giving the audience empathy for Ut. Angel Child, Dragon Child was featured on *Reading Rainbow*.

A.Yagawa, S. The Crane Wife, New York: William Morrow & Co., 1981.

B. 8-10 years

C. After a Japanese man, Yohei helps a wounded crane, A lovely young woman begs to become his wife. She weaves exquisite fabric from which Yohei gains fortune, and later misfortune.

D. According to the book jacket, The Crane Wife is one of Japan's best loved folk tales. It has a wonderful message that being greedy can bring you misfortune. The illustrations are soft and delicate like the words of the Yohei's wife. If the reader has difficulties pronouncing some of the Japanese words in this book, there is a glossary at the end. (i.e. Yohei, said Yoh-hay, is a simple country fellow.) There are some words in The Crane Wife that eight-year-olds might have difficulty understanding, like entreaty. Notably, this Japanese folk tale was translated by Newberry Award Winner, Katherine Paterson.

A. Yashima, T. Crow Boy, New York: Viking Press, 1955.

B. 7-9 years

C. A tiny, strange, and shy boy, Chibi, is ignored by his fellow classmates for most of primary school.

D. Taro Yashima has written a sensitive story about 'how good things can come in small packages.' Crow Boy can help children develop empathy for one another. Two questions that might help ensure a good discussion, following this story are: How do you think Chibi felt about his classmates? What would you have done if the children were teasing and ignoring you? Things begin to turn around for Chibi when a friendly new teacher arrives. There is a unique vividness to the pictures of the sunsets and Japanese mountains in this picture book. It has also been featured on LeVar Burton's *Reading Rainbow*. (Chibi means tiny boy.)

A. Yashima, T. Umbrella, New York: Viking Press, 1958.

B. 4-7 years

C. A little girl longs to use her umbrella and rain boots that she got for her third birthday.

D. Yashima has created a fine story about a Japanese-American girl, Momo, who just can't wait. Many children can relate to this story as they might not be able to wait for.... Christmas, their birthdays, going to grandma's house, or getting ice cream after school. Like many American children, Momo has a unique name with a special meaning, Peach. Yashima shares with the readers the Japanese characters for the words peach, spring, summer, and rain. The author uses a simile for the little girl to describe how she views the rain. ("like tiny people dancing") I like Umbrella because it shares Momo's imagination and shows that some things, like the rain, are worth waiting for.

A. Young, E. Lon Po Po, New York: Philomel, 1989.

B. 7-9 years

C. Three young girls are left alone at home, with specific instructions not to unlatch the door while their mother is away. A wolf, disguised as their grandmother, comes to visit.

D. Lon Po Po is a Chinese version of Little Red Riding Hood, however the story also parallels The Three Little Pigs to some extent. The language is even-paced and there is some repetition in the text. The lovely illustrations are often dark and mysterious. The wolf looks

realistic as his fur and eyes glisten in the light. This outstanding piece of literature maintains the flavor of its' origin, through the characters' Chinese names and the illustrations. This folk tale won the Caldecott. [Side note: Po Po means grandmother.]

Books With Culturally or Ethnically-Diverse Characters ...

A. Adoff, A., Black Is Brown Is Tan, New York: Harper & Row, 1973.

B. 4-7 years

C. A story, in the form of a poem, about a joyful family that loves one another and enjoys life

D. Hooray for Adoff, whose own family is much like the one in Black Is Brown Is Tan, for creating a beautiful story about an interracial family. The world of children's literature needs more quality books about interracial families. Like the setting of this story, Adoff's words are natural. This rhyming story flows from page to page. The realistic, watercolor illustrations support the text; they are neither too soft or harsh. They are just right, like Black Is Brown Is Tan.

A. Ashley, B. Cleversticks, New York: Crown Publishers, 1991.

B. 4-7 years

C. Ling Sung is sad because he cannot do some things the other children are clever at doing. Then, one day he discovers that he does have a special talent, using chopsticks.

D. Cleversticks conveys the message that we all grow at different rates and have special talents. It's message reminds me of the well-known children's book called Leo The Late Bloomer. The children and teachers in Cleversticks are culturally diverse; Derek Brazell has done a fine job illustrating different facial features and skin tones. Some of Bernard Ashley's characters have unique names, just like 'the real world.' (Manjit, Ling Sung, Ms. Dhanjal) He also shows men and women picking up children after school. A friend of mine shared this story with a Korean boy who is visiting the United States for a year; he loved it.

A. Cheltenham Elementary School Kindergartners, We Are All Alike...We Are All Different, New York: Scholastic, 1991.

B. 3-8 years

C. Young kindergarten children describe their differences, but more importantly their similarities.

D. What a marvelous resource for teachers and parents! We Are All Alike....We Are All Different can help children better understand one another, explore their characteristics, and develop empathy for one another. Kindergartners both wrote and illustrated this masterpiece about diversity. Laura Dwight added some clear photographs of culturally diverse children and children with disabilities to the book. This book should be in every early childhood classroom because it is student-made and focuses on diversity.

A. Havill, J. Jamaica And Brianna, Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1993.

B. 4-6 years

C. Jamaica does not like wearing her older brother's hand-me-down boots when her friend Brianna has pretty pink ones.

D. Juanita Havill, author of Jamaica's Find and Jamaica Tag-Along, has created a believable story about an Asian-American girl and an African-American girl and their snow boots. The dilemma over 'but, _____ has _____' is a common situation, almost every parent has to deal with. It is wonderful to have an author address children's wants for other things, especially with two diverse, but imperfect little girls. Anne O'Brien has painted bright expressions on the faces of the characters in this book.

A. Kuklin, S. How My Family Lives In America, New York: Bradbury Press, 1992.

B. 7-10 years

C. A photo-essay of the lives of three children who live in America, but have one or more parents who were born in another country.

D. An African-American child, a Hispanic-American child and an Asian-American child share their families' cultural traditions in How My Family Lives In America. Songs, language, customs, stories and special occasions of each family are shared with the reader. By various examples, this book helps explain how cultural identity is passed down to young children. Susan Kuklin, who has written seven other photo essays, should be commended for this piece of multicultural literature that celebrates individuality. Recipes from Senegal, Puerto Rico, and Taiwan are shared at the end of How My Family Lives In America.

A. Martin, B. & Archambault, J. Here Are My Hands, New York: Henry Holt & Company, 1985.

B. 2-6 years

C. A short story that teaches its audience about human body parts.

D. Here Are My Hands teaches children about body parts using a rhyming text, that encourages the reader to act the story out. It also celebrates diversity by featuring multicultural kids. This book should be read aloud, and would be a great addition to a unit on body parts.

A. Medearis, A. Dancing With The Indians, New York: Holiday House, 1991.

B. 8-9 years

C. An African-American family journeys to a Seminole Indian reservation. While there, they attend an Indian celebration and join in several dances.

D. Dancing With The Indians is set in the 1930's, and based on a real story about a black man who lived with the Indians to escape slavery. The book shares some Seminole traditions with the readers through the illustrations and rhythmic text. Each page has four lines that contain a rhyme. If the right questions are asked to youngsters who have read this story, an insightful discussion will follow.

A. Morris, A. Houses And Homes, New York: Lothrop, Lee, & Shepard, 1992.

B. 4-8 years

C. From Canada to Thailand, a photographic glance at houses around the world.

D. Ann Morris and Ken Heyman have jointly created an informative, expressive picture book, about the types of houses that expand the globe. The print is large and the text is clear. Heyman captures international families that are involved in every day activities. In Houses And Homes, the reader views houses made from stone, wood, mud, and straw. Morris implies that love is what makes a house a home. This book would serve as a useful piece of material for a social studies unit on families and shelters.

A. Oxenbury, H. Tickle. Tickle, New York: Aladdin Books, 1987.

B. 1-3 years

C. This book shows babies playing in the mud, scrubbing in the tub, brushing their hair, and getting tickled.

D. If you want to show your very young child some marvelous watercolor books with multicultural babies, just open Tickle, Tickle. Oxenbury, both artist and illustrator, has appropriately created several, large, cardboard books for babies and toddlers; they even have washable pages. The babies in Tickle, Tickle are happy and are involved in activities babies can relate to.

A. Rosenberg, M. Living In Two Worlds, New York: Lothrop, Lee & Shepard, 1986.

B. 5-9 years

C. Photographs and text address what it means to be biracial/bicultural.

D. Living In Two Worlds, a photo-essay about what it means to be biracial/bicultural, is long overdue. "Just under two percent of all children born in the United States are of mixed racial and ethnic heritage." (book jacket) This photo-essay portrays a healthy image of biracial/bicultural families. It shares pictures of families cooking, hugging, playing, reading, talking, "doing hair," and sharing cultural traditions. Notably, it discusses how children get certain features from each parent, and varied shades of skin color. Living In Two Worlds will need paraphrasing for younger children.

A. Spier, P. People, New York: Doubleday, 1980.

B. 5-12 years.

C. Discusses the individuality of the 40 billion people on Earth.

D. People is written and illustrated by the well-known children's author Peter Spier. Reading Peter Spier's People is the perfect way to introduce children to the unique people of the world. It shares a large variety of languages, games, clothes, cultures, religions, occupations, foods, and physical characteristics with its audience. People is an invaluable resource for celebrating, appreciating, and developing awareness of our individual differences.

A. Williams, V. "More, More, More." Said The Baby, New York: Scholastic, 1990.

B. 2-4 years

C. Three short love stories between babies and their relatives.

D. "More, More, More." Said The Baby is a Caldecott Honor book for the very young. Vera Williams has painted the big pages of this book largely with primary colors. The illustrations and text show and explain different ways people express their love for babies; the beautiful multiethnic babies in this book all have endearing nicknames.

Please Note: The quality of books featuring African-Americans has improved over the past twenty years. There is a great need for good books featuring children of other cultures besides those featuring African-American children and children of European-descent. Many books with Asian characters are not stories featuring Asian-Americans, they are tales from Asian countries.

The comments made in this book file are my opinions. I might object to things that you might not have a problem with and vice-versa. I might not be sensitive to certain things because of my experience and background. Please read the books in this file, before you share them with your children. Below, is a picture book that I do not think is appropriate; I will explain why I think so.

A. Gray, N. A Country Far Away, New York: Orchard Books, 1988.

B. 5-8 years

C. Divided horizontally with picture stories, A Country Far Away reveal similarities between the lives of two boys, one in a rural African village and one in an unnamed western country.

D. The two positive things that I can say about A Country Far Away is that it shows that both families value helpfulness and reading.

Overall, I do not like this picture book as I feel it portrays the western country as superior to the African country. I think it sends the message that living a "have" life is better than a "have-not" life. I make those statements as the author compares the white westerner playing with a computer to the black African boy playing with a chalkboard with a swarm of other kids. It also shows the boy from the western country racing motor bikes with his friends, where it shows the boy from the African village riding a bicycle with a bunch of children chasing him. We cannot merely share/read books with people of color; we must think about the messages books send.

Below is a list of questions you might ask yourself before reading/sharing books with your children/students.

- Does this children's book contain offensive vocabulary?
- Are minorities portrayed in a positive light in this book?
- Does this children's book surpass stereotypes? (i.e. Chinese-Americans in Laundromats)
- Do the people of color's facial features/characteristics look just like white people with painted skin?
- Does this children's book portray people of different cultural and ethnic background all living in poverty?
- Does the book show excessive praise or extreme depreciation of nonwhite characters?

These are only a few questions that you might ask yourself. The above questions are based on readings/ideas from the following books.

Bibliography of Professional Resources:

Huck, C., Hepler, S. & Hickman, J. Children's Literature In The Elementary School, New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich College Publishers, 1993.

Norton, D. Through The Eyes Of A Child , New York: Macmillan, 1991

Sutherland, Z. & Arbuthnot, M. Children And Books , New York: HarperCollins, 1991.